

Reprint of DNR News article, November 8, 2005

Recycling by Wisconsin households remains strong according to 2004 annual report

MADISON – Recycling of all materials that are banned from landfills in Wisconsin increased 5.8 percent from 2003 to 2004, according to reports that municipal recycling programs are required to submit to the state each year.

The recycling programs are required to report to the Department of Natural Resources on the collection of recyclable newsprint, magazines, cardboard, office paper and beverage containers. Reporting is optional for other materials that are banned from Wisconsin landfills, such as appliances, tires, oil, lead acid batteries and yard waste

According to the 2004 report, municipal recycling programs collected a total of 407,660 tons of recyclable newsprint, magazines, cardboard, office paper and beverage containers. This represents a 5.1 percent increase over the 2003 amount of 387,877 tons of paper products and containers.

“Most of the increase was in the recyclable paper categories, which likely reflects good markets and prices for these products,” said Cynthia Moore, DNR recycling coordinator. “The amount of plastic, glass and other beverage containers was roughly the same as last year.”

“We are encouraged by the efforts of the local governments for increasing their efforts and responding to favorable markets and prices,” added Suzanne Bangert, director of the DNR Bureau of Waste Management. “Wisconsin residents are also doing their part by being conscientious about recycling at home.

Moore said the DNR will continue to work with local governments and organizations to do a better job of “recycling away from home,” including at commercial establishments and at special events and sports activities.

“While there appears to be increased interest, we still aren’t getting the volume of recyclable paper and beverage containers from these activities that we would like to see,” said Moore. “That means lost economic value for Wisconsin because we aren’t realizing the full productive value of these products.”

The amount of yard wastes collected in 2004 was up 7.4 percent compared to 2003, from 260,396 tons to 279,755 tons. Wisconsin’s landfill ban on yard waste has been successful in keeping yard waste out of landfills, and yard waste not collected by municipal recycling programs is mostly managed on the property where it is generated.

The DNR recycling program is streamlining the reporting process for municipal recycling programs by moving to a Web-based annual report.

“In 2004, more than 300 local programs used this option and found it to be easier and faster. We’ll be using the input we receive to revise and refine next year’s report,” Moore said, adding that there appears to be a significant amount of “voluntary recycling” that does not find its way into the reports. She encourages local governments to report these collections so that the annual DNR report accurately reflects all the good work they are doing.

Working in partnership with WasteCap Wisconsin and UW-Extension, DNR is using an EPA grant to develop web-based tracking tools for voluntary recycling of two waste streams -

construction and demolition waste and waste electronics collected for recycling through municipal events.

Construction contractors are increasingly interested in the recycling and reuse of construction and demolition waste, which currently represents about 28 percent of the waste going to landfills.

“Much of this debris has value to the contractors,” added Moore. “They have found they can reuse untreated wood on site for erosion control or mulch and avoid transportation and disposal fees.”

Concern over the potential for long-term risks associated with improper disposal of waste electronics has led to a growing number of municipal collection events. The tracking of municipal collection results will improve the DNR’s understanding of the types and amount of waste electronics which will need to be diverted from landfills through recycling and reuse efforts.

Data on [waste diversion and collection for recycling](#) are available on the DNR Web site.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia Moore, (608) 267-7550

Bureau of Waste Management
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources